

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 07210

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, JO, US

SUBJECT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE: DISCUSSION WITH GENERAL BIN SHAKER

1. NEA/ARN COUNTRY DIRECTOR AMBASSADOR WAT CLUVERIUS, ACCOMPANIED BY DCM AND DATT, CALLED ON LT. GEN. ZEID BIN SHAKER, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JORDAN ARMED FORCES (JAF) ON MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 11. ALSO PRESENT AT MEETING WAS MG ABD AL-HADI MAJALI, JAF ASST. CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING ARE AS FOLLOWS.

2. IN DISCUSSING THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA, BIN SHAKER SAID THAT JORDANIAN/SYRIAN RELATIONS WERE GOOD, BUT THAT SYRIA WAS BUSY IN LEBANON AND WAS ALSO EXPERIENCING INTERNAL PROBLEMS. THERE ARE NO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS WITH IRAQ FOR THE TIME BEING, BUT BIN SHAKER CHARACTERIZED THEIR MILITARY EQUIPMENT BUILDUP TO TWELVE DIVISIONS AS "ALARMING." AS FOR LEBANON, THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ANY HOPEFUL PROSPECTS FOR AN EARLY RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION ALONG JORDAN'S BORDERS IS RELATIVELY CALM AT THE MOMENT, JORDAN STILL FACES THREATS IN THE AREA, REGARDLESS WHETHER CAMP DAVID

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SOLVES THE ARAB/ISRAELI PROBLEM OR NOT, AND NEEDS TO BE PREPARED FOR THEM.

3. IN RESPONSE TO OUR INQUIRIES, GEN. BIN SHAKER SAID HE WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR ANY HELP THE U. S. COULD PROVIDE IN REGULARIZING THE MILITARY FUNDING ARRANGMENTS BETWEEN JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA, AND OFFERED TO WORK ALONG

PARALLEL LINES IN APPROACHING THE SAUDIS IF THE U. S. THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL. HE SAID JORDAN WOULD WELCOME "ANY SYSTEM THAT COULD BE WORKED OUT. IF U. S. AND SAUDIS DESIRE DIRECT PAYMENT TO U. S. THAT IS FINE. IF NOT, JORDAN WOULD DO ANYTHING YOU AND SAUDIS WANT." HE SPOKE OF THE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING ANY MORE THAN VERY GENERAL PROMISES WHEN HE DEALT WITH SAG, EVEN THOUGH HE ENJOYED CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE SAUDI ROYAL FAMILY, E.G., PRINCES FAHD, SULTAN AND ABDULLAH. THE SAUDIS WERE ALWAYS VERY FRIENDLY AND WILLING TO PROMISE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, BUT WERE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PIN DOWN ON THE DETAILS OF WHEN AND HOW MUCH IT WOULD PROVIDE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PROBLEMS THAT AROSE WHEN IT TOOK SO LONG TO OBTAIN SIGNED SAUDI AGREEMENTS, RESULTING IN A BACKLOG OF UNCOMMITTED FUNDS.

4. AS FOR THE U. S./JORDANIAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIP, BIN SHAKER BELIEVED IT WAS NOT AS CLEAR AS IT USED TO BE AND FRANKLY APPEARED TO BE WORKING LESS WELL THAN IN THE PAST. HE POINTED OUT SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS:

(A) HE WAS PARTICULARLY DISAPPOINTED OVER THE REDUCTION OF \$4M IN FMS CREDITS FOR JORDAN IN FY78, AND THAT HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS WITH KING HUSSEIN UPON THE LATTER'S RETURN FROM ENGLAND. (DCM EXPLAINED THAT THE DECISION TO CUT THE \$4M HAD BEEN REACHED AFTER CAREFUL DISCUSSION AT HIGH U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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LEVELS AND THAT SEVERAL OTHER COUNTRIES HAD BEEN AFFECTED.) BIN SHAKER EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT U. S. ALWAYS SEEMS TO TAKE JORDAN FOR GRANTED AND MADE POINT OF ASKING WHY U. S. DID NOT RAID THE LARGE ISRAELI FMS PROGRAM. HE DID NOT CONSIDER A VALID ARGUMENT FOR DISBURSAL FROM JORDAN THE FACT THAT JORDAN'S FY78 FMSCR HAS NOT BEEN DRAWN DOWN, SINCE THIS SITUATION IS A RESULT OF THIRD PARTY BACKING REQUIREMENT BEYOND JORDAN'S CONTROL.

(B) THE DECISION NOT TO RELEASE ALL OF THE FMS CREDITS FOR FY77 WAS OF CONCERN, PARTICULARLY SINCE UNDERSTANDING FROM STATE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE JMC WAS THAT THEY WOULD BE RELEASED IF SAUDI ARABIA MADE SEPARATE PAYMENTS ON THE FY75 FMS CREDIT AND THE \$150M WHICH SAUDI HAD PROMISED TO JORDAN FOR FY76 AND 77 FMS CREDITS. SAUDI ARABIA HAD MADE SEPARATE PAYMENTS, BUT THE U. S. WAS STILL NOT WILLING TO RELEASE THE REST OF FY77 CREDITS. IN REPLY, DCM MENTIONED DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN CLARIFICATION FROM SAG THROUGH AMBASSADOR ALI RIZA HAD NOT YET BORNE FRUIT.

(C) JAF WAS STILL UNHAPPY ABOUT THE \$880 THOUSAND IN INCREASED COSTS FOR THE M102 HOWITZERS (CASE UJG) ACQUIRED

UNDER A 1972 LOA. THE INCREASE CAME AT A TIME WHEN JAF BELIEVED THAT IT HAD ALREADY PAID ALL COSTS AND THE CASE WAS CLOSED. INCREASED CHARGES AT SUCH A LATE DATE APPEARED TO BE UNFAIR, EVEN THOUGH THE MATTER WAS DISCUSSED IN DETAIL AT THE JUNE 1978 JMC. CLUVERIUS AGREED TO LOOK INTO MATTER WHEN HE RETURNS TO DEPARTMENT.

(D) JORDAN HAD REQUESTED A ONE-MONTH DELAY IN PAYMENT ON THE \$3.4M DUE FOR THE CASE THAT HAD BEEN SIGNED BY ABU DHABI (CASE ULM) IN ORDER TO PROVIDE TIME TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THE LATTER. JORDAN DOES NOT HAVE THE MONEY TO PAY.

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SEVERAL LETTERS HAD BEEN SENT TO ABU DHABI WITHOUT ANY RESULT AND IT WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY FOR KING HUSSEIN TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THAT COUNTRY SOON IN A TRIP TO THE GULF AREA.

(E) DCM RAISED QUESTION OF CURRENT OUTSTANDING PAYMENTS FOR THIS AND OTHER FMS CASES, AND REFERRED TO AUTOMATIC PROCESS WHICH OPERATES WHEN SUCH PAYMENTS ARE OVERDUE, ALLUDING TO LETTER EMBASSY HAD SENT TO GOJ AND JAF ON GENERAL SUBJECT. BIN SHAKER ACKNOWLEDGED HIS AWARENESS OF THIS PROCESS AND SAID HE WOULD ASK KING HUSSEIN TO RELEASE MONEY DUE (AROUND \$5M) AS SOON AS KING RETURNS TO JORDAN.

5. COMMENT: MEETING WAS FRIENDLY AND ALTHOUGH DETAILED EXPLANATIONS HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN PROVIDED TO JAF IN EACH OF THE PROBLEMS CITED BY GEN. BIN SHAKER, HE IS OBVIOUSLY A BIT UNCERTAIN ABOUT U.S. ATTITUDES CONCERNING MILITARY

ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN. EMBASSY WILL SHORTLY SUBMIT OUR PROPOSALS FOR DEPARTMENT'S AND JIDDA'S CONSIDERATIONS ON BEST WAY TO REGULARIZE SYSTEM FOR OBTAINING FUTURE SAUDI BACKING FOR FMS CREDIT TO JORDAN. THIS IS EMERGING AS A MAJOR ISSUE IN U.S./JORDANIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP, SINCE JORDAN, WITH PROSPECTIVE FY79 FMS CREDIT

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PROGRAM LEVEL, WILL HAVE OVERHANG OF ABOUT \$200M IN UN-BACKED (AND HENCE UNDISBURSED) FMS CREDITS. EMBASSY WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT AND DOD LOOKING ONCE AGAIN INTO THE LATE PRICE INCREASE FOR M102 HOWITZERS (PARA. 3C ABOVE). LATE AND HIGH ASSESSMENTS OF INCREASED MANUFACTURING AND PROOF ACCEPTANCE COSTS THEREIN STRIKES US AS DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECONSIDERATION OF THIS ISSUE, WHICH IS A CONTINUING IRRITANT TO JAF. VELIOTES

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